

## When Your Child Has a Serious Emotional or Behavioral Disorder



Estimates are that about 20 percent of Idaho's children may need some type of treatment for emotional or behavioral disorders which can negatively affect their thinking, feelings, judgment, emotions and/or behavior.

While most children with emotional and behavioral disorders are able to benefit from services such as individual or family counseling, about half of this 20 percent experience severe and persistent disorders. These children are often failing at school, at home, within the community and require more intensive services and supports.

### What's happening to my child?

Emotional and behavioral disorders can take a number of forms. Children may be in danger of harming themselves or someone else. They may withdraw, be fearful, jumpy or sad and depressed.

The exact cause of these problems is largely unknown and usually varies from child to child. Current research suggests that biological, social, psychological and environmental factors are all important.

### Effective treatments are available

A wide range of therapeutic, educational and social services is essential to address the needs of children with emotional and/or behavioral disorders and their families.

Nationwide experience says that a good mental health service system should:

- **Be community-based;**
- **Offer a variety of services; and**
- **Be family-centered — treat the child and help all family members cope with their child's challenging behavior.**

### What services are available?

There is a continuum of publicly-funded services available to eligible children, the majority of which are funded through Medicaid. These include:

- **Community-Based Services** including, but not limited to, crisis services, screening and assessment, diagnostic evaluation, outpatient therapies, care management, family support services, and day programming;
- **Psychosocial Rehabilitative Services (PSR)** also are community-based services. Under PSR, services may include individual and group psychosocial rehabilitative services provided in a variety of settings including school, home, community. These services are designed to help children develop necessary skills and include crisis support, psychiatric, assessment and planning activities. While PSR was developed for Medicaid\* recipients, these services also are available to children who are eligible for Department of Health and Welfare Children's Mental Health Services, but not eligible for Medicaid. For children who are not Medicaid-eligible, a parental share of costs is required; and

- **Out-of-Home Placement Services** such as therapeutic foster care, residential treatment, and brief psychiatric hospitalization

All community-based services are designed to prevent the need for more restrictive care such as hospitalization and residential care.

\*Medicaid is a government-sponsored medical assistance program which provides health insurance benefits for children and adults who are low-income and/or disabled.

### **Cost of mental health services**

Mental health treatment, like all medical care, can be expensive. Your child's treatment may be paid for through a health insurance policy, directly by you, or with your child's Medicaid card.

In addition, Idaho receives a limited amount of funds from the state legislature and the federal government which may be used to help purchase treatment services for eligible children. Your share of the costs of these services is based on your family's ability to pay using a sliding fee scale.

### **Where do I go for help?**

**(1)** You can contact your local Family and Children's Services through the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare to complete an application for services.

**(2)** Family and Children's Services staff will help determine your child's and family's eligibility for services. This determination is based on the severity of the child's illness and the "medical necessity" of the services.

**(3)** If your child and family are determined to be eligible, a staff member will work with your family to complete a comprehensive assessment.

**(4)** The staff person and your family, together, will develop a Service Plan. The Service Plan identifies specific concerns, strengths, what needs to happen to make things better, and how long it should take.

**(5)** For families without Medicaid or other insurance, a sliding fee scale is used to determine your share of costs.

**(6)** You and the staff person review the available providers from which you will select one or more to provide services.

**(7)** The plan is reviewed periodically by Family and Children's Services staff to make sure that the services are helping your child and family.